

WINDSWEPT TO THE MED – Annie Busch. Available for Kindle from Amazon Media EU at £5.47. 452 pages, file size 7671kb.

At 7560 pages on my iPad, this is not a quick afternoon's reading! In fact, Windswept to the Med deserves to be read slowly, with attention, as there is a lot of valuable insight and thought contained within its pages.

It is divided into six sections, each one covering a different part of the journey in detail – beginning with searching for and purchasing the right boat, then taking her to Scandinavia, around UK and Ireland, across to France and finally into the Mediterranean. There is much good information and detailed planning contained herein, and much we can all learn from Anne and Walt's carefully considered decisions.

Each section could, in fact, be read on its own and used as a blueprint for that specific operation (deciding on a boat, fitting her out), or a guide for the passage undertaken (Scandinavia, round Britain and Ireland, down to the Med, western Med and eastern Med). The only problem I foresee is that it all took place in 1989 and 1990 so some of the places may have changed dramatically – but then again, many of them will hardly have changed at all, though certainly prices will have!

As a possible guide, there is vast detail about what was available then. Coupled with current guides, it could prove interesting to follow in their footsteps and explore the many anchorages and bays they found, away from the madding crowd. The tale of two years' travel reads at the same pace as an enjoyable sailing season – this is not a page-turner novel but a bedside companion book, one which cruises along, taking time to explore, discover the surrounding history and venture into unknown waters, every now and then meeting up with boats and previous companions, every now and then erupting into an altercation with boats anchoring too close, irritating ski-boats or drunken grockles!\*

All in all a delightful read – but more than that, an insight into what cruising was like almost thirty years ago and an encyclopaedia of passages to make and ports to visit.

JC-T